

Changes to the childhood schedule



23 December , 2025

January 2026

Introduction of MMRV

Following review of the latest evidence the Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation have recommended Measles, Mumps, Rubella and Varicella (MMRV) vaccination as part of the routine childhood immunisation schedule.

From 1st January 2026, MMRV will be offered to eligible children in accordance to their date of birth and the introduction of a new 18 month appointment.

The MMR vaccine should no longer be used as part of the routine immunisation schedule.

Child Health System will schedule all eligible children for vaccination, GP practices will receive clinic sheets detailing which vaccines to provide.

What's changing in the Routine Programme

Children born on or after 1 January 2025:

- 2 doses of the new MMRV vaccine
- first at 12 months
- second at 18 months

Children born from 1st July 2024 to 31st December 2024:

- MMR at 12 months
- then MMRV at 18 months
- and again at 3 years 4 months

Children born on or after 1st September 2022 to 30th June 2024:

- 1 dose of MMRV at 3 years 4 months (instead of MMR)

Selective MMRV catch-up programme

Between November 2026 and March 2028, children aged 3 years 4 months to under 6 years (Children born on or after 1st January 2020 to 31st August 2022) without a history of chickenpox disease or 2 doses of varicella vaccine will be offered one dose of MMRV.

Operational details as to how this programme will roll out will follow in due course.

New publications

A suite of new PHA public facing leaflets and professional resources have been developed to support the changes to the childhood schedule.

Child Health have received copies of all public facing leaflets, and a small supply will go to GP practices along with professional resources over the coming weeks..

Public information leaflets will be translated into 14 languages including BSL and ISL available on the PHA website. QR code and links to the online versions are available on page 3.



Webinars

Educational webinars for both clinical and administrative staff have taken place in December in conjunction with GPNI and the Clinical Education Centre. If you didn't get a chance to attend, links to recorded sessions are available on Page 3. The complete Northern Ireland training slides set is currently under review and will be available on the PHA website from early January.

PCHR red book insert

Due to the changes, the vaccinations record table contained within existing Personal Child Health Record books (PCHR or "Red Book") will not reflect the current schedule. GP practices will receive new insertable sheets to replace the existing pages. Further instructions will be included along with the delivery.

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MMRV Vaccines ordering and use

Available vaccines: Two MMRV vaccines are supplied as part of the routine childhood immunisation programme - ProQuad® and Priorix-Tetra®. They are clinically equivalent, interchangeable, and are the only MMR-containing vaccines used in the childhood programme.

Preferred product: ProQuad® is the first-line vaccine for all MMRV vaccinations, Priorix-Tetra® should only be ordered when a porcine gelatine-free option is required.

Ordering process: MMRV vaccine stock should be ordered through the usual channels and standard childhood vaccine ordering procedures. Do not order more than TWO weeks of vaccine stock in advance.

Storage requirements: MMRV vaccines must be stored in a vaccine refrigerator between +2°C and +8°C. For any cold-chain breaches - refer to the SPPG/PHA guidance on vaccine storage and handling in GP practices.

MMR vaccine stock: Whilst MMR vaccine stock remains available, it is not part of the routine childhood programme. It should only be used for eligible adults and older children who are not eligible for MMRV. Please refer to the

incomplete immunisation algorithm for guidance.

Varicella vaccine: The single-product varicella vaccine is not included in the routine childhood immunisation programme.

MMRV Vaccines	
<u>ProQuad®- SmPC Link</u>	<u>Priorix-Tetra® - SmPC Link</u>
 **Contains porcine gelatine**	
1 dose per pack	10 doses per pack

Important note on Priorix-Tetra packaging:

Please be aware that the packaging of Priorix-Tetra may cause confusion. The black box on the carton states "1 dose 0.5 mL", which can be misinterpreted in two ways:

- Stock management risk: Vaccinators may assume the pack contains only a single dose, potentially leading to unnecessary over-ordering and stock wastage.
- Administration risk: There is also a risk of overdose if vaccinators mistakenly believe that all 10 pre-filled syringes together represent one single dose, rather than 10 individual doses.

Practices are advised to ensure vaccinators and admin staff are briefed on this packaging issue to avoid errors in ordering and administration. Please remember 1 pack of Priorix-Tetra contains 10 doses.

Useful links and resources

All resources are available at:

Information for healthcare and other professionals | HSC Public Health Agency

Public Facing Leaflets and Communication Resources	
	Immunisation for babies: up to a year old Immunisation: for babies just after their first birthday Immunisation: for children aged 18 months Immunisation: for pre-school children Immunisation: for premature babies
Public communications resources	Childhood immunisation programme
NI Direct	https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/childhood-immunisation-programme https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/vaccines
Vaccine Knowledge Project	https://vaccineknowledge.ox.ac.uk/
Professional Training Resources	
GPNI webinar session – Changes to the childhood schedule phase 2: https://gpni.co.uk/webinars/gpni-clinical-update-changes-to-childhood-vaccinations-phase-2/	
Clinical Education Centre webinars – Changes to the childhood schedule phase 2: https://learn.hscni.net/#/catalogue/launch/72bb3609-8d76-4582-a643-04da023a2b50/ eLearning for health (elfh) NHSE: https://portal.e-lfh.org.uk/	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National immunisation policy and programmes• Immunology and types of vaccine• Vaccine preventable diseases• Communicating with patients, parents and carers• Legal aspects• Vaccine storage• Vaccine administration	

PHA SharePoint training :

<https://community.sharepoint.hscni.net/sites/immVacc/Lists/Tiles/Tiles.aspx> (under development)

Child Health System staff and practice manager webinar [Child Health Staff Practice Managers information session 16_12_25 GM AC.pdf](#)

Conversations to build trust in vaccination: A training module for health workers | World Health Organisation 2017

<https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/documents/publications/vaccines-and-trust.pdf>

SPPG and PHA Guidance on Vaccine Handling and Storage in GP Practices

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/guidance-vaccine-handling-and-storage-gp-practices>

Professional Reference Resources

HSS(CMO) Policy Letter	<u>DoH Policy letter</u>
PGD	<u>PGDs/National Protocols – Primary Care Intranet</u>
Green book chapters	<u>Measles: Chapter 21</u> <u>Mumps: Chapter 23</u> <u>Rubella: Chapter 28</u> <u>Varicella: Chapter 34</u> <u>The UK immunisation schedule: Chapter 11</u>
Complete immunisation Schedule (update)	<u>The complete routine immunisation schedule from 1 January 2026 for healthcare professionals HSC Public Health Agency</u>
Measles poster (update)	<u>Measles - don't let your child catch it - get the MMRV vaccine HSC Public Health Agency</u>
Guidance Notes for professionals (childhood vaccines)	<u>https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/immunisation-guidance-notes-professionals-2017-edition</u>
CHS7 (Unscheduled form) update January 2026	<u>Phase 2 - CHS7 Immunisation Unscheduled Attendance Form (January 2026)</u>

Visual guide to vaccines	https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/visual-guide-vaccines
Routine Childhood Immunisation eligibility Calculator	https://find-public-health-resources.service.gov.uk/Childhood%20immunisation%20eligibility%20calculator/CIEC1EN
Incomplete vaccination status algorithm	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vaccination-of-individuals-with-uncertain-or-incomplete-immunisation-status
Vaccines and porcine gelatine webpage and leaflet:	@ Vaccines and porcine gelatine
MMRV and febrile convulsions webpage and leaflet:	@ MMRV and febrile convulsions
Reporting Adverse Reactions (Yellow Card Scheme)	@ Yellow Card Making medicines and medical devices safer
Electronic Medicines Compendium	https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc
Professional Resources: Phase 2	Information link to follow (see PHA website) Information for healthcare and other professionals HSC Public Health Agency

***Please note: The website links are live documents, documents will be added and updated as they become available. Please use the online version of this document and check regularly for updates.**

For any further queries please contact:

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